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Media Advisory

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Army Corps of Engineers to discuss onsite destruction of chemical munitions at Spring Valley media day, May 7

Baltimore - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold a media day, **Wednesday, May 7, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the federal property behind Sibley Memorial Hospital.** At the media day, Army experts will discuss the equipment that will be used for the onsite destruction (treat and neutralize) of recovered World War I military munitions containing chemical warfare materiel. The munitions were recovered during the Corps' investigation and cleanup of the Spring Valley formerly used defense site.

Army experts plan to use a mobile system, known as the Explosive Destruction System or EDS, to safely treat and neutralize the chemical agent fill of the recovered chemical munitions discovered at Spring Valley.

The treatment process involves a number of steps to destroy the recovered chemical munitions one at a time. These steps include first placing a commercial explosive on a recovered chemical munition and then putting it inside the EDS's 50-gallon stainless steel containment vessel. The vessel is sealed, and the explosives are remotely detonated. This opens the outer casing of the munition. The containment vessel prevents the release of metal fragments and chemical agent into the environment.

Next, neutralizing chemicals that react with any chemical agents in the munition to form a less toxic substance are pumped into the containment vessel. Heaters within the containment vessel are turned on, and the hydraulic oscillation sub-system mixes the reacting chemicals to ensure complete neutralization. The resulting liquid is drained into drums for disposal at a permitted facility. After detonation, the air inside the containment vessel is filtered using a carbon filter before being released into the environment.

Both the EDS' containment vessel and fragment suppression system are mounted on the bed of a small flat trailer that can be transported to sites where chemical materiel is found. The onsite use of the EDS to safely treat these munitions significantly reduces the risks associated with the storage, handling and transportation of chemical filled munitions. To date, the EDS has been successfully used to destroy recovered chemical munitions at Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Colorado, Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland and at the former Camp Sibert in Gadsden, Ala. This is the first time the EDS will be used at the Spring Valley site.

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Munitions treatment system 2-2-2

The Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health have reviewed the Army's plans for the onsite destruction of recovered chemical munitions using EDS at the Spring Valley site, and both regulatory agencies approve of its use. The Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board has also approved the use of the EDS to destroy chemical munitions at Spring Valley. In addition, the EDS was presented to the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board at the board's April 8 meeting as the safest and most expedient method for removing recovered chemical warfare materiel from the Spring Valley neighborhood.

At the media day, Army experts will explain how the EDS works and how it will be used at this site.

In March, the Army conducted the onsite destruction of conventional munitions using the commercially developed T-10 Controlled Detonation Chamber, which was also approved by the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board and regulatory agencies.

If you plan to attend the media day, please call 410-962-2809, Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs. **Press credentials will be required to gain access to the federal property.

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